Volume 3, 1999

AVERROES TODAY

Terrorism and Teaching Philosophy

Editors:
Mourad Wahba
Mona Abousenna

No one should be definitely called an unbeliever for violating unanimity on a point of interpretation
Ibn Rushd

Sapere aude!
"Have courage to exercise your own understanding."
Kant

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Terrorism and Teaching Philosophy

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Contents

Editorial

The world today is in need of enlightened people more urgently than ever due to the emergence of the knowledge society in the Cyber-Age.

Philosophy as a disclosure of reason and logical argumentation could provide us with the tools that could help in achieving this task. However, this is not an easy task because of the newly born international phenomenon, that is, terrorism. Thus, one has to ask:

> Is terrorism due to dogmatism or to fundamentalism, or to both?

From the answer to this question a second one follows: Is it through philosophy in general, or through the philosophy of the Enlightenment, in particular, that we can cure humankind from terrorism?

Dogmatism, today, takes the shape of religious fundamentalism that advocates the possession of the absolute truth. Therefore, in order to fight terrorism one has to fight fundamentalism, or, more precisely, the notion of the absolute truth. Then, the questions that follow are: Is it inevitable to eliminate the absolute truth? If this is so, what is the alternative? And how could philosophy function?

In order to answer these two questions one has to face the following problematic, that is, the contradiction between two aims which the philosopher wishes to sustain. On the one hand, the philosopher has to stick to the academic handling of philosophy and, on the other hand, the necessity of making philosophy as widely available as possible. In other words, the problematic, here, is that the endeavor to achieve the second aim inevitably leads to the abolishment of the distinctly philosophical character.

Within this context, the following papers try to respond to the following issues:

* Teaching philosophy as an essential part of education.
* Teaching philosophy and the promotion of creativity.
* Fundamentalism and Terrorism.
* Is enlightenment an instrument against terrorism?
* Is philosophy of the Enlightenment necessary in combating religious fundamentalism?
* Philosophy and Mass-man.

The Editors

Philosophical News

In **New York** 1996, *Averroes and the Enlightenment*, a book, edited by Mourad Wahba and Mona Abousenna, was published by Prometheus Books. In this book, the editors introduced the reader to those controversial ideas of Averroes that were in sharp contrast to the existing religious beliefs of the Islamic status quo of his time. Thirty-four scholars contributed to this critical evaluation of the great philosopher. It is an intellectual tragedy that Averroes's ideas did not contribute to a Muslim Renaissance and Enlightenment similar to the advancements made in Western Europe and America. As an introduction to the relevant thoughts of Averroes and the ongoing Arab/West dialogue, this excellent volume is a major contribution.

In **Pune** (India), the First World Philosophers Meet was held from 24-31 December 1996 celebrating the seven hundredth anniversary of the death of the Indian philosopher and poet Maharashtra. The participants were over one thousand from different continents. The most important sessions were as follows: "*Science and*

Philosophy", "*Liberation Movement of Women*", "*World Peace*", "*Tradition and Modernization in the West*", and "*Ethics and Social Philosophy*". By the end of the Congress the participants recommended the establishment of "*World Peace University*" in India and to be related to the United Nations.

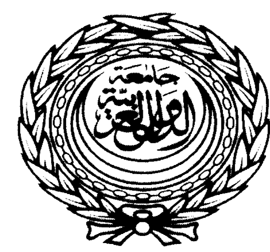


In **Edinburgh** (Scotland), Nigel Bruce, cofounder of the Humanist Society of Scotland and convener of the David Hume Commemoration Committee of the Saltire Society, described in the "*The Immortal David Hume*" the significance of the philosopher's work. At the time, his group was raising funds to complete and install in Edinburgh a bronze statue of Hume.

On September 4, 1997, controversial psychologist Hans Eysenck died at the age of 81. Although a psychologist, Eysenck was not afraid to venture into the territory of other disciplines that overlapped with his.

In the field of aesthetics, he conducted experiments which showed that, at least in its formal aspects, beauty was not so much in the eye of the beholder but a property which could be objectively determined by studying the preferences for certain shapes, colours and compositions expressed by subjects. He found that people largely agreed about which arrangements of shapes and colours were found agreeable and argued that these general preferences are what constitute "good taste".

To his detractors, this was yet another example of his narrow, over-reductive approach, while to admirers it is a mark of his willingness to follow objective, empirical enquiry through, however uncomfortable the conclusions.



In **Cairo** (Egypt), the Arab Ministers of Interior and Justice held a meeting in April 1998. By the end of the meeting an agreement was signed on combating terrorism. It consisted of forty-two items rotating round the Arab cooperation for the purpose of

annihilating terrorism because it threatens social stability.

In **Geneva** (Switzerland), the Second Parliament of Science, Religion and Philosophy was held from 18-21 August 1998. Its theme was "*Science, Religion and Ethics in the Twenty-First Century*". Choosing Geneva as the venue for the World Philosophers Meet 98 gave the Meet a broader international context and recognized the role of the city of Calvin in the pursuit of peace.

By the end of the Congress the participants recommended the imperative of religious tolerance and the legitimacy of religious pluralism within social harmony.

In two Arab countries, **Morocco**, and **Syria**, two seminars were held celebrating the eight hundredth anniversary of Ibn Rushd's death.

In Syria, a seminar under the title "Ibn Rushd in the Mirror of Our Age" was held from 20 to 21 November 1998. From the papers delivered we can easily detect that the same conflict that happened in the twelfth century round the enlightened ideas and the theories of Ibn Rushd is being repeated in our age, that is, the

conflict between irrationalism as a dominant trend and rationalism as a crippled trend.

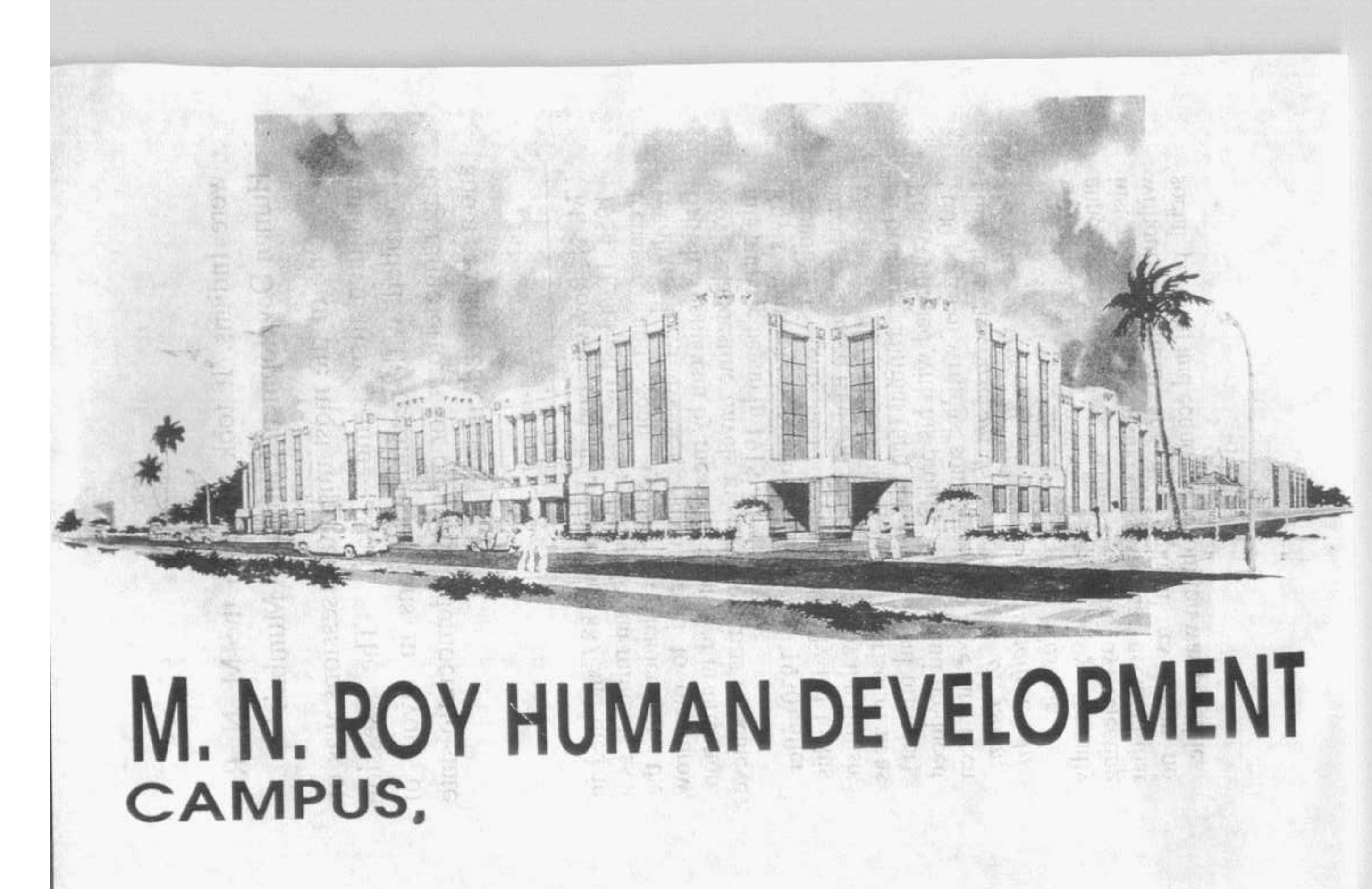
In **Morocco,** a seminar was held under the title "*The Cosmic Horizon of Ibn Rushd's Thought*" from 12-15th December 1998. The most significant incident is that the chairman of the Supreme Committee was Crown Prince of Morocco, Sidi Mohammed.

In **Mumbai** (Bombay), the 14th Congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union was held from 8 to 15th January 1999. The President of IHEU, Levi Fragell, said in the opening session that "*the future of humanism lies in India. Certainly, it will be a key bridge in extending IHEU in the third world – thus making it truly international. The long tradition of sceptical thought and the vitality of modern humanist thought in India make it a key region in increasing the influence of humanism worldwide.*" Six hundred people attended the Congress from 23 countries – of whom about 450

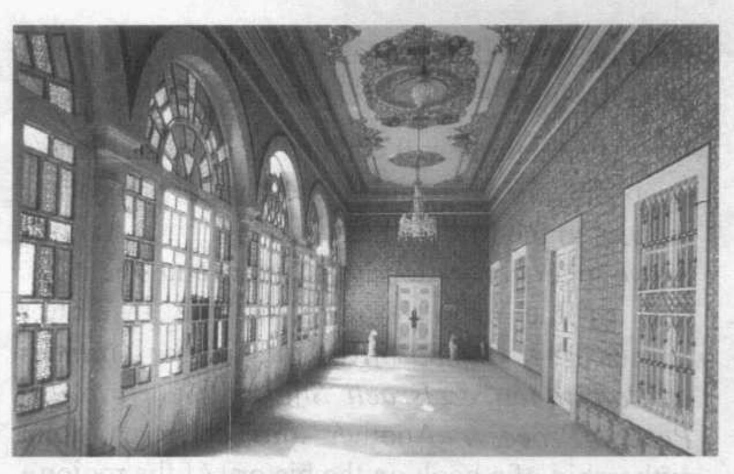
were Indians. It took place in the M. N. Roy Human Development Campus in Mumbai. (*)

One of the most important sessions was on Fundamentalism and Islam. The session concluded with recommendations in favour of long range efforts for creating a democratic state and a secularized culture.

(*) M. N. Roy was born in Bengal in 1887 and died in 1954. He joined the ranks of the Bengal militants as a teenager, and soon became a leader of the revolutionary movement which aimed to overthrow British colonialism by means of an armed insurrection. Roy's clandestine travels in search of arms to achieve this purpose began in 1915.
Roy's clandestine return to India in 1930 after spending 15 years in 17 countries finally led to his arrest, in *camera* trial and imprisonment by the British. Despite the difficult conditions of his imprisonment as an ordinary criminal (and not as a political prisoner), Roy continued with his prolific writing, and produced 9000 pages of writings, some of which have later been published as *Fascism*; *Historical Role of Islam*; *Heresies of the 20th Century*; *Nationalism*: *An Antiquated Cult*; *Science and Philosophy etc.*
On release from prison in 1936, Roy formally announced his break with Marxism by rejecting historical determinism and class war, and declared that without a cultural and philosophical revolution no social, political and economic revolution was possible.



M. N. ROY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CAMPUS,



In **Tunis**, "*La Troisième Rencontre International de Carthage*" was held from 1-5 February 1999 under the auspices of the House of Wisdom. Its theme was "*The Religious Phenomenon Today*". In his inaugural speech the President of the House of Wisdom, Prof. A. Bouhdiba, stated that religion as a social phenomenon is related to life. Consequently, religion should be open and tolerant in the sense that the believer should listen to the other.

In June 1999 the Palestinian-Israeli Institute for *Peace Research in the Middle East* was inaugurated. The Institute is located in the

vicinity of Bethlehem at the German Lutheran School which is a relatively neutral area.

The Institute will conduct research in diverse scientific fields related directly to the peace process in the Middle East, and aiming at training the younger generations of scholars and scientists. One of the major projects on the Institute's agenda is: *A Comparative Study of the Attitudes of Palestinian & Israeli Students Towards the Peace Process*. Another project is a joint authorship of a book on the history of the region.

The idea of establishing this Institute was initiated by the German governor of Hessen as an attempt to revive the peace process in the Middle East. The Institute's projects will be funded by the government of Hessen which maintains good relations with both the Palestinians and the Israelis.

In **Brussels** (Belgium), Alain Martin of Brussels University has claimed that a piece of papyrus, held at the University of Strasbourg since 1904, contains 70 lines of text by Empedocles (c. 495-435BC), the Sicilian

philosopher who developed the idea that everything is made up of four elements – earth, air, fire and water. If true, it will be a major find, as very few manuscripts by pre-Socratic philosophers survive.

The papyrus is of Egyptian origin and has been dated to the 1st century BC. Although Empedocles is cited and quoted by other writers, including Aristotle, only two poems survive from his original writings, making the discovery especially important.

Empedocles is credited with having founded modern medicine as well as prefiguring Darwin, in a poem, which talks of survival of the fittest among competing amalgams of limbs and body parts. His greatest fame, however, is in the legend that he leapt into the volcanic crater of Mount Etna to prove his divinity. He did not survive to tell the tale.

Greek archeologists have unearthed the Lyceum, the institution which, along with Plato's

academy, is considered to be the forerunner of the modern university.

Opened in 335 BC, the Lyceum was a centre of study and research in both science and philosophy, which in that time were still seen as part of the same subject. Alongside these intellectual pursuits, physical exercise was also undertaken, as the excavation of a wrestling ring illustrates.

Aristotle himself is credited not only with laying the foundations for all subsequent western philosophy, particularly, in establishing his system of logic, but also with getting the ball rolling in areas as diverse as biology, political science and literary theory.

The site is situated just 200 yards from the British Embassy. Greece's Minister of Culture, Evangelos Venizelos said, "*There is no doubt whatsoever that this is the school where Aristotle taught. We have decided that the excavations to unearth the remains will continue and that the site will co-exist in harmony next to the Museum of Modern Art so that the two can be visited simultaneously by Greeks and Tourists*."



Goethe year 1999

Frankfurt am Main

The Centre of Goethe's native city became a theatre stage for the 250^{th} anniversary of its famous citizen's birth on August 28^{th}, 1749.

Frankfurt's museums concentrated on Goethe's scientific studies.

On March 1990 the Afro-Asian Philosophy Association (AAPA) organized a seminar on "Goethe in Recent Egypt" in collaboration with Goethe Institute in Cairo. The aim of the seminar was to find out Goethe's influence on modern Egyptian culture and literature.



Terrorism and Teaching Philosophy

The Terror of the Absolute

Mourad Wahba

In his book entitled "Introduction to the Lectures on "*History of Philosophy*" Hegel put the following question:



Where has the history of philosophy to begin?

His answer ran as follows:

"Philosophy strictly begins when the Absolute is no longer regarded pictorially, but when untrammelled thinking does not merely think the Absolute, but apprehends the Idea of the Absolute, the being which thought recognizes as the essence of things, as absolute totality."[1]

This statement does not only apply to the beginning of the history of philosophy but also to the history of human civilization. With the

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[1] Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985, p. 164

emergence of agriculture the city was centered round a temple in which the Absolute ruled over local totem. But this Absolute was regarded pictorially in the shape of an animal as in Egypt or as man like Zeus in Greece.

However, whether the Absolute is pictorial or abstract there seems to be deep rooted tendency, in the human mind, to seek what is identical in the sense of something that persists through change and doesn't have the equipment with which to detect it, but we *believe* in its reality as a criterion for the truth of our value judgments. On the other hand, these judgments, by time, are transformed into the value belief which is considered as an Absolute.

Now the question is:

> What is the nature of the concept which we seek to frame in our minds when we speak of the Absolute?

Historically speaking, when philosophy began in ancient Greece the Absolute was a repository for the eternal truths. In Post-Renaissance philosophy, the Absolute has been the guarantee of rational certainties. But in the

eighteenth century Kant distinguished between seeking to grasp the Absolute and grasping the Absolute. Due to this distinction the Absolute is either a concept or a substance. But in both cases we are liable to fall into a formal contradiction because the Absolute is limitless to the extent that it cannot be defined. It might be stated that in order to avoid such contradiction one may assume that the Absolute is either transcendent or immanent. If the Absolute is transcendent, it is unattainable to knowledge; and if it is immanent, then there will be no distinction between what is absolute and what is relative. Consequently, the Absolute is relativized and this is the paradox of the concept of the Absolute. And if this is so, then the question is:

> Is it legitimate to state that the relation between the Absolute and the relative is dialectical?

The answer could be as follows:

The relative points beyond itself to the unconditional because in it we find a token of the Absolute but not the Absolute. And if secularization is defined as thinking of the

relative in a relative and not in an absolute way, *then the* Absolute, when incarnated, is secularized.

Let me illustrate this obscure statement. Each dogma, being an Absolute, acknowledges of other dogmas as being relative and of itself as the Absolute. In other words, the Absolute, by its very nature, is one and cannot be more than one. Thus, the Absolute is such as to admit of no alternatives or substitutes, and this means that if there is an Absolute then it makes no sense to suppose that there might, instead, have been another absolute of some other different nature. But, in fact, the impossibility of alternative absolutes does not mean that there may not be quite a lot of absolutes, but means that they cannot exist together or coexist. And this is the second paradox of the concept of the Absolute. And the only solution of such paradox is to wage war against these alternatives. And if this is so, then murder interferes as a sequel of defence and hence an organic relation emerges between the Absolute and murder. And this kind of relation may exist in abstracto until somebody comes and

decides to realize in concreto what is already in abstracto.

And the question is:

Is it possible to identify who is behind this kind of realization?

My answer is in the affirmative due to what happened and is still happening all over the world beginning from the eighties of this century. Muslims in Sarajevo are being shelled by artillery from the Christian Serbs. In Egypt, The Islamic groups open fire on civilians. Hindus and Muslims in the Indian Subcontinent are at one another's throats. Northern Ireland blazes with gunfire between opposing sides (the Catholics and the Protestants) claim the same Absolute but at the same time they differ in their conception of that Absolute. In Algeria, armed Islamic groups either shoot or kill no matter whether the victims are Algerians or not. In Japan, the "Aum Supreme Truth" attacked the Tokyo subway system. In Israel, Rabin was killed by a Jewish fundamentalist. In Indonesia, Christians and Muslims kill one another.

From the above-mentioned drastic events it is easy to conclude that the fundamentalist is the only one who can assimilate the organic unity between the Absolute and murder. Within this context is it legitimate to identify the fundamentalist as a terrorist?

To answer such a question one has to answer the following question:

> What is terrorism? Or in other words, what is the symptom of terrorism?

It is mass-murder directed to non-identified civilians. In this case terrorism is a kind of disorder and if disorder is entropy, and if terrorism, by time, becomes a closed system, then the entropy will keep increasing until the system reaches a state of maximum entropy. In this case, all activity ceases. Accordingly, human civilization is liable to fall down and collapse. Thus, terrorism could be defined as civilizational entropy.

Now the question is:

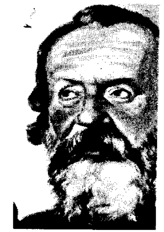
> How can we save human civilization from its entropy, that is, from terrorism?

It seems that uprooting terrorism may be found teaching philosophy. If this is so, then we have to ask about how we can teach philosophy so that it may help us in annihilating terrorism.

If terrorism is rooted in the illusion of a certain Absolute that is in need of man to defend him, then we have to teach history of philosophy and science to prove that we are unfit to be *truthlords*, that is, the illegitimacy of grasping the absolute truth. In history of philosophy and science the belief in the centrality of the earth cracked down due to Copernican theory that the earth is not the centre of the world. On the contrary, the earth revolves with the other planets round the sun, and consequently any truth grasped by man on earth cannot be absolute. Then came Galileo and defended Copernicus theory in his book entitled **Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems**. Immediately, the book was banned. There was scarcely a copy to be found with the booksellers and Galileo was ordered to Rome. The Inquisition was unyielding in its demand that Galileo abjured his error in holding and teaching the Copernican views.(2)

(2) Galileo, **Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems**, U.S.A. 1953, p. XXIII

That was in the sixteenth century. In the second half of the twentieth century, nuclear physics approved of the impossibility of grasping the absolute truth due to the principle of uncertainty declared by Heisenberg, and as a result the concept of probability and its sequel, the concept of creativity, began to prevail. Thus, it could be stated that we now live for the future that opens itself to novelty.



Within this scientific context, philosophy should have a new task. This is no wonder because the task of philosophy is in perpetual flux, even if we assume that philosophy is concerned with the method as it has been the case with Aristotle in his "Organon" or with Descartes in his "Discourse", or with Bacon in his "New Organon", or with Kant in his "Critique". Yet this method has been tackled in different ways. There can be no presumption that the four philosophers

concerned with the question of method are interested in exactly the same thing.

Thus, the question is:

> What method could the philosophers be concerned with by the end of the twentieth century?

To identify this method one has to find out the major problematic that need to be supposed and this problematic is embedded in this global phenomenon "terrorism" which is based on religious fundamentalism. The problematic here is embedded in the contradiction between being religious and being terrorist.

Now, the question is:

How can this problematic be surpassed?

Being religious does not contradict being terrorist when one is religious in a fundamentalist way; that is, in a way that produces an optical illusion of grasping an absolute which is under threat from other absolutes. Thus, being religious in this way produces terrorism. Consequently, in order to eliminate such terrorism one has to dig

deeper into the concept of the Absolute so as to unmask the illusion of the possibility of grasping it. And if grasping the Absolute is equivalent to dogmatism, then we have to eliminate dogmatism. And this elimination was heralded by Averroes in the twelfth century through the adoption of the human right of interpreting the sacred text and by Galileo in the seventeenth century who repeated what Averroes has said about the Quran. Galileo states that under the surface meaning, the biblical texts may contain a different sense. Then he goes on saying that it would be necessary to speak about God in a concrete way to accommodate Him to the common people who are rude and unlearned. Consequently, we can surpass the above-mentioned contradiction through interpretation.

Secularization: A Condition for Enlightenment and Human Rights in the Middle East

Mona Abousenna (*)

At the close of the 20th century and the beginning of a new millennium, it is highly imperative for any philosophical community to reexamine and reevaluate two major concepts that have dominated the 20th century thought and life, namely, the concepts of enlightenment and human rights. The purpose of such reexamination is to interpret these two concepts in the light of a future vision guided by the achievements of the 20th century, which is characterized by the scientific and technological revolution, while surpassing them. The specific purpose of this paper is to place these two concepts and their new interpretations within the perspective of the process of peace in the Middle East.

(*) Mona Abousenna is professor of English Literature at Ain-Shams University, Cairo, and General Secretary to the Afro-Asian Philosophy Association (AAPA) and to the Ibn Rushd & Enlightenment International Association.

In order to clarify, I would like to start by examining the concept of human rights by posing the following question: What are the new global changes which have emerged during the last two decades and which compel us to revise the principles of human rights?

But first let me refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 adopted by the UN General Assembly and which consists of 30 articles that cover civil, political, economic and cultural rights. The first and second articles state that people are born free and are equal in dignity and in rights and that no discrimination should be made between them on grounds of race, sex, language, religion, political or national, social views or on grounds of property or birth.

What is of specific importance is the mentioning of two words in these two articles, namely, "religion" and "property". What is meant here by religion is the relationship between human beings and a specific absolute. By property is meant the ownership of land or factory.

This has been the traditional meaning of both terms. However, in modern times, religious fundamentalism introduced new meanings for both terms through the concept of “absolute truth.”

In order to clarify the meaning of absolute truth, it is necessary to define the word "dogma". The Greek word "dogma" derives from a verb meaning "to seem good" to such or such person or persons, and it had two senses in the early Christian centuries. It meant either an opinion accepted in common by any society; or the decision of any authoritative body, such as the dogmas of the Stoics, the decrees of the Roman Senate, and later the decrees of the emperors and the dogmas of the religious authorities.

Accordingly, the term "absolute" is intrinsically related to the dogma, or strictly religious dogma, and derives from it. Hence, the religious fundamentalists, or the neo-dogmatists claim that they possess the absolute truth which is inherent in their own dogma. In this sense, one could call these dogmatists the "truthholders" or the owners of the absolute truth.

The epistemology of the "Truthlords" rests upon the assumption that reason is capable of grasping the absolute truth because truth is of a religious nature and is, hence, literal and does not accept any interpretation.

What we need now is to establish an epistemology that would counterbalance that of the "Truthlords". The new epistemology relies on interpretation because interpretation originally meant the free examination by the human mind of the religious texts. Consequently, truth is acknowledged to be relative and not absolute.

Hence, the question is: to what extent is it legitimate to use one's own reason in a text that is regarded as absolute in the sense of transcending time and space?

If such text is subjected to human reason the absoluteness of the absolute comes under threat-- and if we do not exercise our reason we lose the specificity of being human, i.e., being rational animals. Within this context, we should differentiate between the rights of the human being as a human being, and the rights of the human being as a dogmatic who believes that he

possesses the absolute truth and hence eliminates the other who denies his absolute truth.

The human being as a dogmatist could be defined as someone who derives his ideas from external authority and not from internal rational conviction. In this sense, the dogmatist is necessarily anti-enlightenment, because it was the philosophers of the enlightenment who clarified the notion of dogmatism, particularly Kant, who proclaimed that dogmatism meant the opposite of the Enlightenment as he defined it as "man's way out of his self-incurred tutelage."

Here we arrive at the crucial point, namely, how to transform the global community from the culture of dogmatism that breeds conflicts which result in "dogmatic violence" and terrorism, to the culture of de-dogmatisation which is basic to the culture of peace?

De-dogmatisation could be defined as the negation of dogma in the sense of the negation of theology which is based on the belief of the possession of the absolute truth by the human mind which is then imposed on the external world by means of violence.

In this sense, de-dogmatisation is a necessary step following de-mythologisation which aims at relativising the absolute modes of thinking. The realisation of this aim demands the revision of the theological mode of thinking which tends to absolutise faith. And since there is plurality of faiths, the struggle, or strictly speaking, war, is a must. And since war, in modern times, has to use nuclear weapons, peace is threatened to the extent that humanity could come to its catastrophic end.

But how can we realise de-dogmatisation in the Middle East?

In my opinion, this can happen through two main channels: first, de-dogmatisation should be the core concept of a new movement of enlightenment advocating philosophy of hermeneutics in the three major religions of the Middle East, namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. As far as Christianity is concerned, the two movements: the movement of religious reformation in the 16th century and the movement of the enlightenment in the 18th century should be adopted and emulated in the light of the Middle Eastern cultural environment which is dominated

by cultural taboos. As far as Islam is concerned, the forerunner of hermeneutics was the Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd who in the 12th century introduced his philosophy of interpretation of religious scripture, as an alternative to traditional theology. His disciple, the Jewish philosopher Maimonides attempted the same path within Judaism. However, Ibn Rushd's philosophy was aborted when his books were burnt and he was banished in his hometown for the rest of his life due to a conspiracy by the theologians and the political decision of the Caliph.

The second channel for realising de-dogmatisation is education, or strictly, creative education as being the most fundamental human right as creativity constitutes the origin of civilisation.

These two major channels were adopted by the Afro-Asian Philosophy Association (AAPA) ever since its foundation in 1978. In its constitution it is stated that AAPA aims at establishing a movement of enlightenment based on free inquiry and creative thinking in all aspects of Afro-Asian societies from a philosophical perspective with the purpose of overcoming the

cultural taboos which hinder the development of such societies and make them unable to be equal partners with the Western societies, and reduce them to mere consumers of the knowledge produced in the West. The goal of AAPA, however, is to turn these consumers into producers of knowledge, and, in this way enrich human civilisation.

The aim of such movement is to secularise the traditional cultures by subjecting them to interpretation in order to uproot all the myths inherent in those cultures and to rationalise them, or strictly, to relativise the absolute dogmas behind these traditional cultures, or as they are referred to frequently, as the indigenous cultures.

The means of interpretation is critical thinking which should be directed against dogmatism which obstinately insists on the knowledge already attained and, therefore, rejects any new knowledge on the sole ground that it contradicts the old. Critical thinking also seeks to uncover the roots of everything. And since the myth forms a basic feature of knowledge, ancient and modern, a rational analysis of the roots of the myth would be a practice of critical thinking.

This means that the myth should not be tackled as a myth per se, but emphasis should be laid on the symbolic features of the myth denoting something else beyond the myth itself. Here the Cartesian method would be of specific significance in the surpassing of dogmatism which relies on old unchallenged concepts.

In this sense, we have to revise the traditional trends of epistemology which stress the relation between knowledge and truth and which led to three theories of truth: "Truth as a copy of reality", "truth as a code", and "truth as success". Whereas, within the concept of creativity as defined by Wahba, the relation should be between reason and reality, and not between reason and truth. In this sense, we could evade falling into dogmatism because dogmatism is the illusion of grasping the absolute truth. And as long as we eliminate the concept of truth, we eliminate dogmatism. Within this context we should revise the traditional concept of human rights which states that every human being has the same rights regardless of religion, sex or race.

But a crucial question has to be raised :

How could we legitimize the dogmatic, who, through his dogma, eliminates the human right of those who do not adhere to his dogma to the extent that he could terrorize them on the pretense that they are a threat to his dogma or, strictly speaking, to his absolute? And if it is the case that dogmatism has become dominant by the end of this century, then it is also the case that terrorism has become a threat to human rights. And, therefore, we should confine the concept of human rights to those who are not dogmatic. Consequently, we have to advocate de-dogmatisation in order to heal the dogmatics from being dogmatic.

Women and Religious Terrorism

Fariba Hashtroudi (*)

History has proved that any power whatsoever built on brutal force automatically attacks minorities, among others, and we should say especially women. Philosophers in ancient times did not attribute any virtue whatsoever to the female gender. Women remain the first target of any religious fundamentalist power. This is a sad constancy of history. In order to constitute the principles of their segregationist power, the theocracy uses the "sacred terror" in every form it knows: psychological, intellectual and of course physical. It is under the name of Religion, which becomes a synonym of the State justification, that slashing women, torturing, raping or killing them by stoning are justified.

Since the Khomeynist revolution, the terrible sight of the religious

(*)The writer is a free lance Journalist and a chairwoman of Association for the Mohsen Hachtroudi Foundation.

terrorism inflicted to women, here and there, has become part of our daily life, from North Africa to the Middle East.

The 20 years existence of the Islamic Republic of Iran can perfectly illustrate our debate. In the very beginning of the Khomeynist coup d'état which deviated the democratic revolution of the Iranians, in the name of Allah, the intellectual terror was installed in the streets. That was perhaps the best and the easiest to destabilize and neutralize the majority of the population.

The forthcoming triumphant theocracy aimed to divide the socio-political forces into enemies. To muzzle half of the population, women, by the other half, was the first step of this strategy.

The anti-female decisions taken by Khomeyni, just a few months after his return to Iran in 1979, demonstrate perfectly this strategy.

***February**

26: Khomeini's bureau requested to delay the Family Protection Law.

27: Women’s National Service discontinued.

28: Absolute segregation of women in sports is ordered.

*** March**

3: Khomeyni told women that "a man can divorce his wife whenever he wishes."

5: the law on Women's National Service is repealed.

6: Compulsory veiling of women imposed by Khomeyni’s decree in civil service job.

***May**

1: Minimum age of marriage for girls lowered from 18 to 13.

12:Segregation in education ordered in a ministerial circular.

22: the first lashing of an unmarried Iranian woman for making love, took place arbitrarily.

***June**

3: A ministerial circular excluded married women, irrespective of age, from day schools.

24: the first four Iranian women were lashed arbitrarily on a seaside resort for bathing in a mixed crowed with men.

*** July**

12: the first three Iranian women faced firing squads allegedly accused of prostitution and corruption. They were burned alive.

*** August**

22: the first Iranian women were executed, arbitrarily, for alleged adultery.

***September**

30: A new law replacing the Family Protection Law (1975) deprives women of all their gains.

***October**

7: Women deprived of the limited right of guardianship of their children by a decree.

The orders of the supreme guide were, by all means, put into practice. The so-called "popular will", in other words the Hezbollah - fanaticized masses of the only "political party" which was

allowed - started terrorizing Iranian women with impunity.

Since then, hundreds of thousands Iranian women are deprived of their most elementary rights. Since then, the number of Iranian women, stoned to death or executed, lashed in public, raped and tortured in various prisons, can not be counted. The latest stoning of Iranians occurred under the "modernist and reformist" government of Mohammad Khatami, 9 persons altogether, men and women. The latest one, a man, who manages to escape from the whole of the stoning just a few days ago, was released. This was called a miracle by a local journalist!

In 1979, with the hysterical atmosphere against the American hostages, the hatred against "westernized" persons in general and women in particular, had tremendously increased. The repression hit blindly secular women and political activists, leftists, communists but also "bad" Muslims.

During the summer of 1980, Khomeyni ordered the terrible fatwa of God's enemies. On the top of the list we could find political

organizations which had declared total war against the clerical power. According to the Khomeyni's Fatwa, spreading their blood in the street, without any form of trial, was an Islamic duty. Thousands of schoolgirls and students aged 12 to 18 were arrested, tortured and raped before being executed. It is said a virgin cannot go to paradise...

From 1981 and during the Iran-Iraq war, women were called up to be bellies bearing sons to become future soldiers and conquering enemies of Islam. Khomeyni in person carried to the pinnacle those who sacrificed the greatest number of sons and brothers to the glory of the War and for the International Reign of Islam. This ideology reminds us tragically of the Nazi ideology and their terrible life style. In Hitler's *Mein Kampf* one can not find the word Frau in the index but rather the archaic and biological word of *Weib*. In Khomeyni's Mein kampf, (*Kachf al Asrar*: the discovery of secrets), the only mention made to women is about their menstrual problems. For Nazism as well as for Khomeynism females are animals for reproduction and procreation. Both ideologies are based on the

bipolarity of male and female. That is Nature and Instinct, Spirit and living matter, Light and Darkness. Guess which part the women get. For the Nazi, women were considered enemies like the Jewish and other "inferior" races. For Khomeynists it is quite the same thing.

The disenchantment of Khomeynism:

The terrible Iranian defeat, after eight years of devastating war, was called the "poison cup" by Khomeyni who had promised the conquest of Jerusalem via Karbala. What about the hundreds of thousands of Iranian women who had sacrificed their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons? Nothing but misery. The heroes of yesterday are the new poor deprived people of today. Widow was left alone or with handicapped sons or grandchildren. When the state is absent, misery seeks for the only extreme solution.

Peace and the Myth of the Moderates:

With Khomeyni's death the myth of moderate mullahs, started with Rafsandjani, is at

its paroxysm with Khatami. But facts are there. The more the women resist the more the repression is institutionalized.

Under Rafsandjani Shari'as laws are systematically codified.

Example:

Adultery: Article 102 states: The stoning of an adulterer or adulteress shall be carried out after each has been placed in a hole and covered in soil, he up to his waist and she up to a line above her breasts. The law stipulates the size of stones which must be used in stoning to ensure maximum suffering of the accused. (Not too big because it may cause sudden death, and not too small because it would not hurt).

In November 1995 a paragraph has completed the code. If a husband surprises his adulterous wife he can kill her immediately with no repercussions or punishment.

The Khatami's Miracle!

"Things were supposed to be much better off when Khatami was elected president in Iran... Nevertheless, the changes are fragile and

uncertain: they have no foundation on law and rights. In Iran, it is still the law that oppresses women," noted Hélène Martinez the vice president of Moha in our last special newsletter.

We would add that Khatami affirms by himself that "the defense of the law means above all the defense of *Velayat Faghih*." Iranian TV November 1997. And the defense of the Velayat Faghih means obviously the defense of the Shari'a Law: degrading laws such as lashing and stoning women to death, or gouging out the eyes of the criminals as is required by the retaliation law. A few years ago, the justice of the Islamic Republic, condemned a 16 year old girl who was accused of murder to life imprisonment, and both her eyes where gouged out. The age of penal responsibility is set at the age of puberty, 9 lunar years for girls.

Therefore, in Iran under Khatami, the segregation between sexes starts still in the womb of pregnant women. The Islamic law of punishment against abortion, article 487, proclaims:

"The blood money -diyyeh- is half the price for a girl embryo than it is for a boy embryo."

Khatami and his government defend by all means these kinds of law. Upon his return to Iran, after visiting Unesco, Ayatollah Mohadjerani (minister of Islamic Guidance) was criticized by Iranian journalists during a press conference for not having adequately defended Islamic laws, notably those on stoning to death. That is his response: "I have not put any of our sacred laws into jeopardy (...) but stoning must be practiced within a closed circle of believers so that it is not used as bad publicity against our regime." (Ressalat, April 8th 1998). Mrs. Choja'i, one of the female vice minister of Khatami had quite the same attitude about the so-called sacred law.

Now, let's see the new decrees concerning woman under Khatami's government. In January 1998 the Islamic Parliament rejected a law proposal about installing equality between men and women regarding inheritance.

In February, the superior Council of the Cultural Revolution presided by Khatami, refused

to ratify the International Convention against discrimination towards women.

In October the project of law for the total segregation in hospital (which concerns also the medical staff) was voted by the Islamic parliament. This law forbids sick women to be taken care of by any men doctors.

And the very recent project of law which was voted by the Islamic parliament legalizes the punishment of anyone who dares to defend the freedom and the dignity of Iranian women.

It says: (Stirring up the contractions between men and women by defending the rights of women outside the rules recognized by Islamic Law is forbidden and leads to prosecution."

The 6o million Iranian citizens, men, women, children and teenagers live in an everlasting state of war. The Islamic Republic tries to impose the idea of "Islamic human rights". Do they not repeat frequently that they refuse the principle of the universal declaration of human rights which they consider as a western cultural invasion?

"The difference between Islamic and non Islamic rights is in the concept of rights itself." Repeats constantly Yazdi the chief of the judiciary. Odious excuse for the crimes committed in Iran, but also in Algeria, in Afghanistan, in Sudan and elsewhere.

"Today, while propaganda around the separation between state and religion increases, the Islamic Iran is in the process of correcting the human world according to religious beliefs and values around the main principal of Velayat Faghih." affirmed Khatami on December 27th at the Iranian TV.

History has proved that an ideological government, especially one which claims transcendence, can lead only to tyranny.

For us, secularity is the sine qua non condition for freedom in general and freedom of women in particular. We believe that only when a society becomes profoundly secular the will power of one gender upon the other loses its most precious legitimacy. When we undermine the divine bases of Power, we undermine, at the same time, the natural superiority of the male upon the female.

From the Wisdom of Philosophy
to
The Violence of Terrorism

M.B. Ramose (*)

A One-time Terrorist

"However, when scholars attempt to align their work with what governments say and do, they find themselves forced to embrace unsatisfactorily vague definitions which do little more than help to legitimize the official notion that all subversion is terrorist. It may thus be most useful to call off the search for a coherent definition and to accept that advances will be possible only when we abandon the hope that there is a credible answer to the question - what is terrorism? On this view it is better to embrace both the flexibility and the value-laden elements of the word and accept the concept of terrorism which is current in contemporary affairs: a rhetorical insult whose content is determined not by any *a priori* academic test but rather by those wielding power in society. The designation

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'terrorist', with all the moral opprobrium that it entails, should be regarded as an inevitable consequence of any violent challenge to any status quo situation, whatever the degree of immorality involved. The unsuccessful rebel will live and die a 'terrorist'. In contrast, the successful subversive will certainly serve time as a terrorist, but victory will bring both power and a shift in the use of the label away from him/herself and in the direction of the defeated."[1]

The above citation brings out a number of points which we propose to look at closely. The points will, in turn, form cumulatively our point of departure in considering the following question: may the right to use violence in order to change, from a morally disgraceful social reality to a morally acceptable one, be denied to the terrorist only on the plea that the targets of terrorist violence or torture are illegitimate in the sense that they are innocent?

It is suggested, in this citation, that the quest for objectivity in defining terrorism is inevitably vitiated by the subjective idiosyncrasies that are part of any attempt to give an objective definition of terrorism. There is thus no credible def

of terrorism even though such a definition may claim to be scientific. [2] Most attempts at the definition of terrorism focus primarily on one of its aspects, namely, the direction of violence at the innocent or illegitimate targets. [3] This kind of focus tends to confuse the reason, that is, the cause setting in motion the right to use violence and the use of violence as a means to an end. On the basis of this confusion, the cause is often obscured and often deliberately divorced from the means with the result that only the means – in this case the "indiscriminate use of violence" - becomes the point of focus. To the extent that indiscriminate suggests irrational in the sense that neither a just cause nor a legitimate purpose is discernible in that much the designation terrorist becomes almost immediately morally opprobrious. Thus, the terrorist is condemned for lack of reason, that is, acting without a just cause or a legitimate purpose. We propose to give a philosophical analysis of this condemnation as part of the answer to the main question with which we are concerned.

The above citation also suggests that the terrorist ultimately depends upon chance in the

use of armed force. If chance decrees that one succeeds in one's "terrorist" activity then the terrorist of yesterday becomes not only today's liberator but may even be one of the most revered statesmen or stateswomen of today. In that capacity yesterday's "terrorist" will have the good fortune to label others as terrorist especially those who question the moral legitimacy of the order over which the former terrorist presides. [4] Since chance is the final arbiter as to who is and who is not a terrorist, there seems to be little point in trying to find an objective standard for defining the terrorist. It is then apparent that the argument that the definition of a terrorist depends upon which hat one wears is rather tenuous. The course then appears to be an attempt to understand rather than define terrorism. Understanding terrorism for us means identifying philosophically its reason (cause) and purpose. Our perspective then is that if resort to violence is a right what kind of right is it and why and when is its exercise justified? Is a terrorist not entitled to the right to resort to violence? We emphasize that this question is distinct from one pertaining to the manner in which the terrorist deploys torture and uses violence. For purposes of analysis it is crucial to

bear this distinction in mind. Here our discussion will be mainly a critique of some of the positions held by Honore.[5]

The Right to Self-defence

Our understanding of Honore is that even the terrorist may be regarded as a rebel, that is, as someone who may rise up in opposition to the prevailing social reality and resort to the use of violence in pursuit of the aims of the opposition. The identification of the terrorist with the rebel is rather infelicitous because it obscures the legitimate distinction between rebellion, revolution, war and terrorism. Whatever the distinction between these concepts, we hold that the right to self-defence is the common thread running through all of them and binding them together. For this reason we prefer the right to self-defence rather than the right to rebel as the basis of our discussion. In the light of this understanding we shall analyse Honore's definition of the right to rebel. He defines the right to rebel as follows, "*the right of an individual or group to resort to violence, if necessary on a large scale, in order either (a) to*

secure on behalf of individuals or groups conceived as exploited or oppressed a change in the government, structure or policies of the society to which they belong (radical rebellion), or (b) to resist on behalf of individuals or groups who are attached to their way of life a change in the government, structure or policies of their society which the rulers of the society intend to bring about (conservative rebellion, or (c) to secure on behalf of a group conceived as distinct the right to independence from the society to which it at present belongs (rebellion in aid of self-determination)." [6] This definition asserts "the right of an individual or group" and, as we shall see later, affirms it. The affirmation of this right is based upon the "last resort" criterion and linked directly to the purpose of the violence.

"But suppose the campaigns of those who are denied human rights are ineffective. Surely the implication must be that the citizens to whom human rights are conceded may be *compelled* as a last resort to rebel. They are not merely to be excused when their patience snaps but are justified in rebelling. And if the moral justification for doing so consists in the fact that

rebellion is the only means by which they can in the last resort assert their humanity, defend their way of life or vindicate their independence, does it follow that they have *a right to rebel*? It is not merely that they regard themselves as justified because they see no alternative, or that the consequences of rebellion appear preferable to those of passive resistance but that they have a right which others are bound to respect and which entitles them to the help, or at least the neutrality of those who are not party to the dispute. Would it make sense to deny someone the right to do what he is compelled to do in the sense not of being coerced but of having no other means of vindicating his fundamental interests? Does not everyone, if the dilemma is presented, recognize such a right? To deny it would be to assert that people may be bound indefinitely to submit to conditions of life which we and they recognize as intolerable; that their interests may properly be disregarded and they themselves treated as unworthy of respect.

"It seems to me, therefore, that in a proper case there *must* be a right to rebel. It will not generally be a formal legal right, but neither is it a

purely informal right grounded in the conventional morality of the international community. It possesses an intermediate, semi-formal status. It is based, that is, both on a certain conception of human dignity and on an interpretation of the political norms of the international community, including the principles, embodied in documents, which members of that community have endorsed." [7] This affirmation of the right to rebel rests upon a certain understanding of "human dignity". As to the content of this understanding there certainly is room for debate. At the same time general agreement seems to be possible if the minimum content of this understanding is that "human dignity" revolves contemporaneously around the rights to life, freedom, equality and self-defence This quartet of organically contemporaneous rights forms a wholeness or a oneness. They are the kind of rights which no individual or community can confer upon another. To be human means to be the gratuitous possessor of this quartet of rights. Other individuals and communities may decide to recognise, respect and actively assist in the protection of these rights or they may decide to do just the opposite. In this

latter case they will provoke self-defence. The right to self-defence is in reality the basic issue under discussion whenever the question of resort to violence by a terrorist is being considered. In our view, self-defence is ultimately aimed at the protection of individual or group life. This means that in the face of harm or injury to life it must be recognized that a reaction to protect life is a reasonable expectation. In some cases, the exercise of the right to self-defence might be immediate in response to the immediacy and indubitability of the threatening harm. But self-defence might also be delayed or *post facto* if it is judged that immediate reaction might result in more harm than good. We propose to consider both aspects of self-defence. If self-defence is, by definition, action, including the killing of others, motivated by the protection of life it appears that there is no ground for denying anyone the exercise of this right. Even martyrdom is an act of self-defence provided it is understood as the protection of as well as the giving of life to others by giving up one's own life.[8]

Although self-defence is always linked conceptually to the prevention of injury or harm on

individual or group life, the exercise of this right becomes particularly problematic once violence is involved, especially the killing of others. The basic problem in this connection may be stated as follows. Defending oneself is taking action to avert and repel preventable death. Thus even though death is an inevitability, it is not a necessity in the sense that there can be ways and means of postponing it. Proceeding from the principle of equality in the quartet of rights, the desideratum to postpone one's own death must be ascribed to all others as well. On this reasoning, killing another is not only undesirable but must also become a self-imposed prohibition. Going against this prohibition is the core problem of war in general and terrorism in particular. The solution to this problem lies in the justification of violence. The theory of the just war [9] is undoubtedly a justification of violence. It lays down the reason for resorting to violence (*jus ad bellum*) and the reason for the use of violence in war (*jus in bello*). [10] It is a recognition that there can be circumstances in which resort to the use of violence may be permissible. As such it stands in sharp contrast to the tradition of absolute pacifism. In view of the ceaseless arming by states and the

reality of terrorism, it seems that the tradition of absolute pacifism is somewhat unreal. We shall therefore ignore this tradition here. Instead, we shall try to understand what moral consequences ensue from the recognition that even the terrorist has got the right to self-defence.

Honore's definition of the right to rebel is linked to specific aims all of which are predicated on "in order...to". The problem with this linkage is that at one level it presents the aim as the cause of the exercise of the right to self-defence. This is true for, as long as, the causative power of the aim is not construed to mean that it is the origin of the right. The right is not originated by its aim but it is only activated by it. The right is, as it were, dormant. To use Aristotle's terminology, the right is a potency translated into act by its aim. This distinction is important because it preserves the insight together with its corresponding consequences, that the right to self-defence can neither be conferred upon nor withdrawn from any individual or group by anyone. The terrorist, like the rebel or the revolutionary, may, therefore, not be denied the right to resort to violence. However, restrictions

may be imposed on the use of this right. The link between the right and its aim could be illuminating with regard to an assessment of the manner and extent to which it is used in specific cases. The just war tradition provides, among others, two principles that may be applied in assessing the use of violence. These are the principle of proportionality and the double effect principle.[11]

The Assessment of Violence

The principle of proportionality holds that moderation must prevail in the use of violence. It lays down the duty to fit the punishment to the crime. Accordingly, the pursuit of violence must stop if and when the aim is achieved. In addition, it holds that the kind and degree of violence used must be appropriate in two respects. One is that the violence must be directed exclusively at the target which is necessary for the achievement of the aim. Another is that the violence must be applied as humanely as possible in the circumstances. On the other hand, the principle of the double effect holds that a person may perform an action that he or she foresees will produce a

good and a bad effect only if the following conditions are verified at one and the same time: (a) that the action intended must be directly and immediately linked to the achievement of a good purpose; (b) that only the good effect must be intended; (c) that the good effect must flow directly from the use of appropriate means and be indifferent to any bad effects that may be inherent to the action as a whole; (d) that there be a proportionately grave reason for permitting whatever bad effect. We are aware of the abstract character of these principles. Concrete life conditions will either affirm or refute their validity. For this reason we shall now turn to a general description of terrorist violence and assess it in the light of these principles.

1.Terrorist Violence

In broad terms the search for justice may be described as the causative factor of the terrorist's recourse to the use of violence. Commitment to justice becomes unbending and thus turns the terrorist to only one direction, resort to violence. This is of course not automatic since in most cases resort to violence is the last option approved

with some degree of reluctance. In this sense resort to violence is neither absolute nor is it a matter of dogma. Having made the option for violence, the terrorist usually selects targets which appear to be remotely connected to the injustice that is being opposed. For example, kidnapping combined with the threat to kill if specified conditions are not met. Hijacking of aircraft for the same purpose. These two methods of the terrorist involve a high degree of torture particularly for the immediate victims and their relatives. The terrorist is also prone to planting bombs timed to explode at the moment when they would cause great and extensive damage. Through this kind of violence the terrorist intends to convey their message to those immediately responsible for the perceived injustice as well as the community at large. [12] The problem with this manner of conveying a political message is that it involves violence to those who seem to be remotely connected with injustice. In other words, the terrorist attacks the innocent and not the guilty. In this way terrorism violates the principle of non-combatant immunity. The principle holds that the innocent, in the sense of those having no direct and immediate connection with the

injustice, must be spared from attack. However, it may be argued that civilians of any modern democratic state can hardly be said to be innocent of the injustice sustained by those they have voted into power. For this reason it has been suggested that non-combatant immunity should be more thinly defined and that the term, military objective, points directly to those who are intent on using violence. Thus only military objectives may be held responsible for violence and are as such legitimate objects for attack. The suggestion is interesting to the extent that it cuts and limits the chain of responsibility. However, it does so at the expense of glossing over the complex web of responsibility characteristic of the modern democratic state dominated by the free enterprise economic system.

2.State Terrorism

Instead of trying to define state terrorism we propose to focus on the threat to kill those who least expect to be killed by the use of nuclear weapons. Self-defence is the basis for the acquisition of these weapons. This threat is particularly distressing and torturous to those who

are aware of the ever-present threat of nuclear annihilation arising either from real war or "human error". This condition is even more pronounced in those who actively seek complete, total and comprehensive nuclear disarmament. The intention [13] to use nuclear weapons is not in doubt although conventional wisdom holds that the best use of nuclear weapons lies in their non-use. [14] Thus the possession of these weapons serves to deter the potential adversary from using them. "... deterrence involves manipulating someone's behaviour by threatening him with harm. The behaviour of concern to the deterrer is an attack; hence, deterrence involves the threat to use force in response as a way of preventing the first use of force by someone else. Manipulation via threat captures the essence of deterrence, and manipulation of this sort would appear to be a rather primitive relationship." [15] On the basis of the preceding definition, we suggest that the following are the elements of deterrence. There must be the deterrer and the deterred. Self-defence is the purpose of deterrence. The deterrer must announce the intention to attack and have the capacity to carry it out against a potential adversary. The deterrer will also harbour the

expectation that the potential adversary will act in a manner that will render the threatened attack unnecessary. In other words, it must be assumed that the adversary is a rational actor. This conceptual frame of mind is particularly relevant to the great powers having nuclear weapons because they rely on the "rationality of the irrationality" argument. This argument holds that the potential adversary shall at all times act so rationally that in their own interest they will never cross the rational threshold and plunge into the irrationality of using nuclear weapons. [16] This argument is relevant in that the targets of nuclear weapons are not exclusively military objectives. They include those who least expect to be attacked and, ironically, even those opposed to nuclear armament.

The morality and the legality of nuclear weapons has been called into question for more than half a century. In the course of this questioning, the proponents of nuclear armament have succeeded to use the political process - whether or not democratic - to increase and refine these weapons of mass destruction. The weapons have neither regard nor respect for tile principles

of proportionality and double effect. To date we are witnessing MAD (mutual assured destruction) in the context of nuclear armament. Yet, the protagonists of this MAD situation appear bent to go beyond this present madness. First, they have invited states to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a means, partly, to restrict access to membership, that is, the possession and control of nuclear weapons, of the nuclear club. Second, they are now vigorously urging for accession to and ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). But it is common cause that they do so now since they have acquired alternative technological capability to continue nuclear weapons tests without being in breach of the CTBT.

Meanwhile many states have, on the basis of good faith, acceded to and ratified the NPT. In addition they have concluded regional treaties aimed at making their regions nuclear weapons free zones. Yet, the nuclear dud continues the inexorable march of nuclear armament precisely when concrete steps of nuclear disarmament are overdue. The reality of nuclear war cannot be justified under the rubric of *jus ad bellum* and *jus*

in bello. Real nuclear war, if it were to erupt at all even as a result of "human error", can never be the Clausewitzian continuation of politics by other, let alone, violent means. If to be rational is to be human then the only rational option with regard to these weapons is total, comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament. In the light of the real threat of nuclear omnicide, the assured reduction of our planet to a radioactive rubble, and in view of the continued reluctance of the members of the nuclear club to actively implement nuclear disarmament, several international organizations finally succeeded through the United Nations to present the problem before the International Court of Justice.

The question put before the Court was: "Is the threat or use of nuclear weapons in any circumstances permitted under international law?" The Court held: "There is in neither customary nor conventional international law any specific authorization of the threat or use of nuclear weapons; There is in neither customary nor conventional international law any comprehensive and universal prohibition of the threat or use of nuclear weapons as such; A threat

or use of force by means of nuclear weapons that is contrary to Article 2, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter and that fails to meet all the requirements of Article 51, is unlawful; A threat or use of nuclear weapons should be compatible with the requirements of the international law applicable in armed conflict, particularly those principles and rules of international humanitarian law, as well as with specific obligations under treaties and other undertakings which expressly deal with nuclear weapons; It follows from the above-mentioned requirements that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law. However, in view of the current state of international law, and of the elements of fact at its disposal the Court cannot conclude definitively whether the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be lawful or unlawful in an extreme circumstance of self-defence, in which the very survival of a State would be at stake; There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear

disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." [17]

While the Court appears reluctant or unable to "conclude definitively" on the matter and, with particular reference to "an extreme circumstance of self-defence", it remains true that the threat of nuclear omnicide is by no means hypothetical. The implicit justification of "self-defence" means that in the particular case of nuclear weapons humanity may be allowed to cross the threshold of rationality and sink into the darkness of irrationality. The irrationality of "self-defence" here is given the upperhand over rationality. Yet it is the latter which is supposed to define being human. It appears then that in the name of "self-defence" humanity may even be permitted to abandon being human. We cannot accept this view either in the name of good law or from the point of view of commonsense. If the indiscriminate use of violence is the principal reason for the censure of terrorism state terrorism in the form of the threat to use nuclear weapons is equally indiscriminate and above all, irrational. It deserves the same censure as that the terrorist must pay. Can the teaching of philosophy help to

avert this censure? Yes, only by the return to the wisdom of philosophy teaching the abandonment of absolutism and dogmatism. These latter have more than the propensity to lead to the violence of terrorism.

Philosophy as Practical Wisdom

Philosophy is generally understood as the love of wisdom. It is the quest to understand the meaning of life. It is the ceaseless search to comprehend reality as a wholeness. Wisdom refers to the human urge and capacity to understand: it is inextricably connected to experience and intelligence. Wisdom is maturing but matured experience characterised by openness to reality. For wisdom nothing is closed and decided beforehand. Absolutism and dogmatism are strange bedfellows with wisdom. Wisdom is the discernment of order in an apparent chaos. It is awareness that understanding in the abstract has the limited value to illuminate some dark corners of experience. It is the recognition that other dark corners of experience demand the honesty to profess our ignorance and the courage to dare to know. This then means active participation in

searching for the meaning of life without any absolutism or dogmatism. If the statesman or stateswoman and the terrorist were to accept that the truth that they hold and are so very much committed to is by no means the one and only truth: if they were to learn that openness to reality means freedom from dogma; if they were to recognise that experience teaches only if it is open to being taught then genuine dialogue with experience would be opened. The lessons that humanity has drawn or even ignored from this dialogical encounter with experience are contained in all the disciplines including philosophy. The latter through its peculiar reliance on reason to attempt an answer to its basic question, why life at all, teaches that humanity will often attain only partial but no less genuine truth if absolutism and dogmatism are discarded. This means for the terrorist and the statesman that the practical application of this lesson from philosophy is likely to reduce considerably resort to violence in the name of self-defence.

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Growing Religious Fundamentalism in South Asian Countries (*)

Chandrajit Yadav (India)

South Asia occupies an important position in the world, with its ancient civilization, great history, plural cultures and also geographically, economically and politically. The sub-continent with a number of countries of vast areas, big population, major market, important maritime communications, hub of Asia, Africa and Oceania and various nationalities and languages, is usually called "a museum of races". Indus and Ganges valleys were cradles of ancient civilization and home of religions and philosophies. It was in this region that several great religions of the world emerged and plural cultures developed extensively.

(*) Extracted from *The Modern Rationalist*, March 1999, India.

Religions in South Asia with long history and age old traditions are of extremely important influence in current international relations. The major religions of the world such as Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Bahaism and Christianity have co-existed in this region for centuries and have gone to South East Asia and to Indo-Chinese regions as well.

But today we find an unfortunate situation that the religions which were founded by the greatest and the noblest men that the world had produced with great objectives to uplift the human spirit by making truth, love, brotherhood, peace and non-violence as the foundation of life, are being exploited for narrow, selfish and destructive purposes. Instead of using the religions for enlightenment of the people it has

often tried to keep them in the dark instead of broadening their minds, it has frequently made them narrow minded and intolerant of others and made people behave like beasts. This is a great human tragedy.

Since 1970's and 1980's there have been calls for rejuvenation of the traditional world and religions in this region such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism etc. have manifested the increase of emergence of many organizations, belonging to various religious sects, and is also reflected in the religious thinking and faiths, striking deeper roots in both the hearts of the people and the societies. As a result of this religious fundamentalism, in various forms, has come into being and functions as the mainstream of the day.

In the first 15 years of the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, India carried out its secular policy as stipulated by its constitution very firmly and therefore there were very few conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. However this balance was unfortunately upset in 1970's, 1980's, and, ever since, communal riots and ethnic disputes and clashes have been rising and becoming increasingly intense. Religious fundamentalism has been growing rapidly, especially Hindu fundamentalism, advocating great Indian Chauvinism. It asserted that non-Hindus in India had to accept Hindu culture, Hindi language and be proud of Hindu nation. The Hindu extremists had continuously mobilised Hindus to participate in the struggle centering around the Babri Mosque and ultimately demolished the historic mosque. Several thousands of people were killed in the riots which

followed and the great name of India was tarnished in the eyes of the world.

The following quote from the famous Sri Krishna Commission Report on Bombay riots (January 1992-93) makes it absolutely clear who were the guilty.

"*Turning to the events of January, 1993, the Commission's view is that though several incidents of violence took place during the period from December 15, 1992 to January's 1993 large scale rioting and violence was commenced from January 6, 1993 by the Hindus brought to fever pitch by communally inciting propaganda unleashed by Hindu communal organisations.*

But the Maharashtra State Govt. which is a coalition government of Shiv Sena and B.J.P. refused to accept the recommendations of the above commission and dubbed it as an anti-Hindu

report. Happenings during this period are clear examples that through every type of communalism is dangerous, the communalism of majority community is much more aggressive and dangerous.

During the same periods (1970's and 1980's) there emerged a dynamic drive, with the Middle East as its centre, for rejuvenation of Islam. It affected both Asia and Africa. It has given impetus to such movements in South Asia. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives all took vigorous actions to pursue the Islamic Sharia and promulgated a series of reforms concerning legislature, judicature and administration in accordance with Islamic principles. In Pakistan conflicts between Sunni and Shia became very serious leading to a large scale of violence.

The Sikh rejuvenation movement which had started with the establishment of Khalsa in late 19th century led to the formation of a political party 'Akali Dal', a religion-based Party. Sikh extremism also raised the demand of separate State of Khalistan".

Buddhists in India and Nepal have also been engaged in the campaign for the rejuvenation and reformers of Buddhism in Bhutan also launched a movement of "Buddhist Culture, with one country, one nationality, one belief and one language".

Likewise, Sri Lanka also witnessed serious armed conflicts between Singalese who believe in Buddhism and Tamils who believe in Hinduism. The armed conflicts in Sri Lanka have become increasingly intense and almost uncontrollable.

Tamilians in Sri Lanka are now demanding a separate State.

Religious Fundamentalism and Communalism

Thus we have seen that in South Asia almost every country is facing the problems of religious conflicts and ethnic confrontations. Arrogance of superiority, lack of tolerance and narrow attitude and hatred and adoption of violent path are responsible for this kind of situation.

Unfortunately, electoral politics has become an easy tool to exploit religious, ethnic, sect and caste sentiments. Several political parties on this basis have come into existence. This is leading to political fragmentations and political instability, seriously hampering the development and progress.

In my opinion we should differentiate between religious fundamentalism and communalism, though undoubtedly religious fundamentalism forms the basis of communalism, but while the first sticks to age old values, traditions and social systems and refuses to accept modern ideas, methods and life, the second one aggressively and violently exploits religious emotions of common masses to spread hatred and instigate violent confrontations against the people of the other religious. In fact, the communal organizations in every religion represent the vested interest and their struggle in the name of religion is really an attempt to take a big share of power and privileges for themselves as far as possible. Communalism is just another name of social and political reaction. Many a false trail is drawn to confuse the issue, some times they adopt

fascist methods. They are enemy number one of social change and social justice.

It is also interesting to note that communal organisations in every religion very often oppose socio-economic and international issues. Recently when India and Pakistan Governments decided to ply passenger buses between Lahore and Delhi to normalise and improve the relationship between the two countries, it was simultaneously opposed by Shiv Sena in India and Jamate Islami in Pakistan. Because the tensions between the two countries help the communal forces politically the recent attacks on Christians and their religious establishments including churches in India and Pakistan are nothing but fascist methods to terrorise innocent people.

The conflicts between different religions in South Asia fall into two major categories. The

first one is between different religions and the second one includes the conflicts between different sects inside a particular religion, such as those between the Shia and the Sunni in Islam and those between Mahanaya and Hinayana in Buddhism.

Acts of religious intolerance can lead to substantial social and political instability and result in setback to regional and international cooperation. The dogmatists need to understand the utility of catholicity of outlook in as much as it helps in erecting a medium in which growth can take place more easily. Therefore, to reduce the tensions between different religions, ethnic, sects and economic interest groups and countries, what is needed most is increasing an effective dialogue and also to minimise the miseffects, appropriate communication channels need to be opened up.

The fact of the matter is that what is very often forgotten is that in the rich soil of this region, there has sprouted a remarkable unfolding of a composite culture as a fruit of the thousand years of Hindu - Muslim encounter and the co-existence of these along with other faiths. There are countless symbols, rituals, shrines, epics and poems underlining this rich co-existence. There are millions of people belonging to different communities, have centuries lived and still live together in peace.

Under the changed conditions of today, in the new emerging International order, countries of South Asia, for that purpose all Asian countries should understand the right contents of their history, their language, philosophies, religions and many rites and rituals, make their cultural affinity abundantly clear. They have been in

contact with each other for centuries by interaction and through exchange and they have been immensely benefited in different phases of life, science and technology, trade and commerce, arts and architecture and now with new knowledge and facilities of communications and media, they must collectively think and work as European Union has started doing.

Religious fanaticism has to be fought unitedly by all progressive and secular forces as a top national task.